

# Twisters churn across the state

## Damage, outages are widespread

By ANTHONY F. SHANNON

Heavy rainfall, high winds and a series of tornadoes ripped through New Jersey yesterday, causing at least one death, knocking out electrical power for almost 90,000 consumers and creating widespread property damage.

Schools were closed early in several towns and at least two colleges were forced to shut down when electricity went out.

The storm was part of a savage weather system that moved up the East

### A STORM'S FURY

Coverage continues  
on Pages 35 to 41

Coast and unleashed the season's first invasion of Arctic air.

More than 100 customers were evacuated after winds ripped off part of the roof of a store in Morris County, and 20 Nutley residents fled their homes after a gas line ruptured during the storm.

A "tornado touchdown" in Piscataway at 12:04 p.m. reduced a single-family house to a jumble of

building materials and personal belongings and damaged about a dozen other houses in the Yorktowne Square development.

Yves Caseau, 26, crawled through the wreckage of his Saratoga Court home, found his 15-month-old daughter, Laure-Helene, and emerged with only a few cuts and the baby unharmed. No one else was in the house at the time.

Caseau said debris covered his daughter as she slept in her bed but did not fall on him.

Winds up to 56 mph were recorded at 12:15 p.m. at Newark International Airport, where flights were delayed up to an hour. There were gusts up to 70 mph elsewhere in the state.

The Federal Aviation Administration said numerous Newark-bound flights were diverted to other airports because of turbulent skies over the airport.

Gov.-elect James Florio, en route from Washington to Trenton to open his transition office, said his train was delayed by the storm.

"We were on the train for five hours," Florio said. "They were pulling trees off the tracks, and there was a tornado in Maryland."



Neighbors stand outside a home toppled by a tornado in the Yorktowne Square development in Piscataway

Photo by Kathleen W. Perlelli

Authorities and residents in Essex, Sussex, Hunterdon and Middlesex counties reported seeing twisters. Barbara Thomas, a meteorologist with the Na-

tional Weather Service, said confirmation of the tornadoes would take several days.

The Goethals Bridge, connecting

Elizabeth and Staten Island, was closed from 12:30 until 4:30 p.m. after two tractor trailers overturned in heavy winds, according to William Cahill, a

spokesman for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

"It seemed like both of them  
Please turn to Page 38

## Body of food exec found shot and dumped in Morris river

By BILL RILEY, RON MARSICO and LAWRENCE RAGONESE

A vice president of the Supermarkets General Corp. in Carteret, parent company of the Pathmark stores, was found yesterday morning fatally shot and dumped in a river in Morris County.

According to authorities, the body of Robert E. Wunderle, a 45-year-old Westfield resident, was discovered about 9 a.m. in Rockaway. The body was partially submerged in the Rockaway River off Beach Street, near the police station and a half-mile from Exit 37 of Route 80.

Charles Coe, chief of investigations for the Morris County Prosecutor's Office, said an autopsy disclosed Wunderle, the victim of a single gunshot to the heart, died sometime after midnight Wednesday. He said it was not known whether he was killed at the scene or if his body was merely dumped there.

Wunderle was dressed in a business suit, according to Coe,

who said the lower part of his body was in the river, while the upper part was lying on the bank. He declined to reveal whether the man's wallet or other valuables were missing. No possible motive was disclosed.

"All we know for sure at this point is that the victim left his residence for work Wednesday morning," Coe said, explaining investigators planned to spend last night talking to Wunderle's wife, co-workers and friends to obtain further information about the man's schedule and a reported business trip.

Police also are attempting to locate the 1989 Mercury Grand Marquis owned by Supermarkets General that was assigned to Wunderle. The gray vehicle has New Jersey license plates EXC-26V, Coe said.

Wunderle was hired by Supermarkets General in 1974 and served as the company's economist and vice president in charge



Robert Wunderle  
Corporate economist

Please turn to Page 18

## 6 Jesuits, housekeeper and daughter are murdered in El Salvador slaughter

Star-Ledger Wire Services

SAN SALVADOR—Armed men killed and mutilated six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter yesterday after bursting into their house at a leading university. A witness said uniformed government troops were involved.

In response to the killings, the United States said yesterday it will ask for an investigation into the massacre, and will accelerate deliveries of military aid to government forces there.

The El Salvadoran government denied responsibility, condemned the slayings as "savage and irrational" and said an investigation was under way.

The U.S. National Council of Churches also denounced the slayings, and the U.S. ambassador said the slayings would have a "negative impact" on President Alfredo Cristiani's rightist government.

The killings were committed "with lavish barbarity," said the Rev. Jose Maria Tojeira, the Jesuit Provincial for Central America. "For example, they took out their brains," Tojeira said.

The bodies of four of the priests, including a leading human rights activist, were found on the lawn of the priests' residence, three of them apparently lined up against a wall and shot at close range with machineguns.

Roman Catholic Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas compared the killings to the slaying of his predecessor, Oscar Arnulfo Romero. That 1980 assassination marked the beginning of years of killings and kidnappings by

right-wing death squads.

The chilling murders came on the sixth day of fierce combat in and around this capital following an attack by leftist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front guerrillas.

Tens of thousands of Salvadorans streamed out of the capital's embattled suburbs yesterday, pouring onto roads to flee pitched battles between govern-

ment troops and leftist guerrillas.

Military planes and helicopters flew overhead, machine-gunning leftist rebel positions in the suburbs. The crackle of small arms fire could be heard as the exodus gathered strength.

Fighting was intense around Jose Simeon Canas Central American Uni-

Please turn to Page 8

## CONGRESS PAY HIKE House votes \$30,000 raise, ethics reform

Star-Ledger Wire Services

WASHINGTON—House members voted yesterday to raise their pay by more than \$30,000 a year over the next 13 months—to above \$120,000 a year—while revising ethics rules to put new limits on outside earnings.

The bill was passed 252 to 174, just 10 months after

Florio backs pay hike for governor—Page 32

intense public criticism forced the House to reject a larger pay increase.

The new proposal sped through the House with strong support from the leaders of both parties and an endorsement from President Bush. A slight majority of Republicans voting opposed the bill despite Bush's stance.

The Senate was expected to consider it today.

"I can understand and sympathize with people in my

district who make 15 and 20 and \$30,000 a year who would have trouble understanding why this kind of pay level is needed," said House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.).

But he said pay increases were needed to attract top-quality people as judges, government officials and members of Congress. "In your heart and your mind, you know it's the right thing to do."

Rep. James A. Traficant (D-Ohio) took a different view. "I understand the game—we come with ethics reform and we sneak in a pay raise," he said.

The complex 100-page pay and ethics package was announced by Democratic and Republican leaders Wednesday, but copies were not made available to the public until debate was well under way yesterday.

Public criticism, some of it galvanized by broadcast talk-show hosts, helped lead to defeat of a proposed 51

Please turn to Page 10

## Collapse kills seven schoolkids

Star-Ledger Wire Services

MONTGOMERY, N.Y.—At least seven schoolchildren were killed and 18 injured yesterday when part of a cafeteria wall collapsed during a lunchtime wind storm, pelting students with concrete blocks, authorities said.

"It was a very quick thing and there wasn't anything anybody could do about it because it happened all at once," said Montgomery Mayor Donald Presutti.

About 100 students in the first, second and third grades were in the cafeteria when the storm struck East Coldenham Elementary School about 12:30 p.m., said state police Lt. Robert Hughes.

"You are talking about huge concrete blocks that fell on top of the kids," Hughes said.

State police identified the dead as: Amy Innis, 8; Joanna Lichtler, 7; Larae Litchhult, 8; Peter Orsino, 8; Charles J. Scott, 7; Adam J. Soltis, 7, and Maria J. Stuhmer, 8.

The storm system was the same one that moved through the South on Wednesday, spinning off tornadoes that killed 17 people in Alabama.

State police and survivors said they believed the school was hit by a tornado, but the National Weather Service said it could not confirm that until investigators went to the scene.

Faye Goldstein, a district spokeswoman, put the number of dead at seven and said 18 other students were injured and taken to four hospitals.

At St. Luke's Hospital in Newburgh, the condition of the children ranged from stable to critical, spokeswoman Debra Sgroie said. Two children taken to Westchester County Medical Center in Valhalla suffered injuries to the head and elsewhere, said hospital spokesman Barry Bowman.

"There are a lot of broken legs,

Please turn to Page 41



A fireman carries a student from the Coldenham Elementary School near Newburgh, N.Y., after a glass wall collapsed, killing seven children

## JCP&L ready to seek hefty rate increase

By TED SHERMAN

Jersey Central Power & Light Co. plans to file for a major rate increase today that is expected to hike electric bills by nearly 15 percent.

While JCP&L officials yesterday said they were still finalizing figures on the rate request and would not discuss the scope of the increase, they reported

they plan to file with the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) later this afternoon a petition that others say will likely top \$230 million.

The company serves more than 840,000 customers in all or parts of Morris, Middlesex, Mercer, Somerset, Union, Hunterdon, Monmouth, Ocean, Warren, Burlington, Passaic, Sussex and Essex counties.

The full impact on customers was not known yesterday. However, the state Public Advocate said if approved in full by the BPU, the company's request would raise bills by about 14.7 percent.

"It's an enormous increase," said one official within the advocate's Division of Rate Counsel.

The monthly bill of a typical residential customer using 500 kilowatt-hours of electricity—an average amount—is currently \$49.05.

The proposed request contains two separate elements—a base rate increase to cover higher operating and maintenance costs of at least \$156 million since the company's last rate case more than three years ago, and an energy adjustment charge to offset purchased power costs of at least \$74 million.

Those are the figures JCP&L has been using in recent discussions of the proposed filing with the BPU, the advocate, and other parties to the rate case, and could go even higher when the utility actually submits its filing. In the

Please turn to Page 22



Rep. Richard Gephardt  
"Right thing to do"